



## Progress on Tribal Relations 2011

Consistency and growth is demonstrated in our government to government relationship between the Chippewa National Forest and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in four focus areas:

### *Outreach and recruitment to Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal members:*



▪ **Rabideau Conservation Corps and the Worker Investment Act:** The Rabideau Conservation Corps provides seasonal work programs from 6 weeks to 10 months in length. During the 2011 school year, 14 economically disadvantaged youth from area reservations including Leech Lake, participated in work/learn programs conducted at the Camp Rabideau National Historic Landmark. Eight students successfully completed their Generic Equivalency Degree, and two students were selected for a Hazardous Fuel Fire Fighter training opportunity hosted by the Forest Service.

- **Youth Conservation Corps:** The Chippewa National Forest annually hosts up to 12 Youth Conservation Corp enrollees. YCC in 2011 included six Youth, including two tribal members, ages 15 to 19 working alongside Forest Service professionals and technicians at trail and campground maintenance, timber stand improvement, and roadside brushing.
- **Youth Career Camp:** Camp Rabideau hosted a first Youth Career Camp in November 2010. Three Career Camps will be possible with a \$55,000 Workforce Diversity grant from the National Fire and Aviation Management Workforce Diversity program. This year's career camp focused on forestry skills.
- **Hazardous Fuels Firefighters:** Three tribal youth were selected for the workforce diversity fire fighter program, funded by a recent Hazardous Fuels grant for the next three years. The crew of three will attend classes through Itasca Community College and build their Forest Service experience as Student Temporary employees.
- **Student Temporary Employment Program:** Continuing in 2011 the Chippewa National Forest employed 18 students through the Student Temporary Employment Program. Two Native American students were among the 18 Students selected.



- **Leech Lake Tribal College Interns:** The Chippewa National Forest has capacity to host multiple Leech Lake Tribal College interns for 10 to 12 weeks. In 2011, a tribal college graduate is working as an assistant receptionist at the National Forest headquarters office and an Intern is assisting at the Norway Beach Recreation Area Visitor Center, developing Ojibwe language experiences for visitors.
- **Leech Lake Temporary Employment Program:** The TEP assists those needing a hand-up instead of a hand-out by providing a positive means to employment when there is a lack of jobs. Two ongoing projects include removal of the invasive garlic mustard plant at the Onigum/Stony Point area of Leech Lake, and grounds maintenance of the Chippewa headquarters site.
- **Minnesota Family Investment Program:** Through an ongoing agreement with the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, the Chippewa National Forest employed one individual. This program provides MFIP recipients with practical work experience to aid re-entry to the workforce.



### ***Partnerships:***

- In 2011, 5 new **Participating Agreements** were established with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, of which 25 initiated on the Chippewa National Forest. These participating agreements included employment in heritage survey work, the Leech Lake summer youth employment program, and temporary employment for grounds maintenance, snow plowing, and removal of invasive plants.



- **Economic Recovery** projects with the Leech Lake Band represented over \$560,000 of work and employment in 2010. A final project, reconstruction of 6 miles of Highway 33, the Mission Road northwest of Cass Lake along Allen's Bay, is currently being completed.
- A second **Wildland Fire Hazardous Fuel grant** (\$155,000) was awarded during 2010 for work on tribal and private lands near the tribal community and school in Bena, MN.
- A **Forestry skills training** is scheduled for June 2012. "WoodsWork" is a hands-on prototype designed with the Klamath Tribe to build capacity for year-round employment in ecosystem restoration that can be applied in Minnesota.
- Three tribal members were designated by the Secretary of Agriculture to a new 15-member **Resource Advisory Committee** implementing Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act (P.L. 110-343). Members recently recommended 21 projects for implementation in 2012, including \$144,000 of project work

proposed by Band members. These projects include shoreline restoration activities for youth in Onigum, MN; an exploratory hydrology study of the Nature's Lake outlet near S-Lake, MN; removal of invasive wild parsnip along the Onigum Road; and prescribed burns to enhancement blueberry habitat.

### ***Cultural and Institutional Awareness:***

- A jointly-produced **Programmatic Agreement** to implement national forest heritage evaluations with the Leech Lake Band was signed by both governments in November 2010.
- The National Forest and the Band cooperatively built proactive mitigations in expectation of a high voltage powerline through the national forest and reservation. Two collection agreements signed with Ottertail Power Company for the Bemidji-Grand Rapids Transmission Line provided \$374,850.00 for wetland mitigation efforts and \$1,401,242.00 between FY11 and FY12 for Hunting & Gathering Enhancement mitigation over the next 10 years that will benefit the LLBO.
- Students at the Rabideau Conservation Academy and Learning Center along with local elders are propagating sweetgrass at Camp Rabideau for restoration outside the powerline area. *(photo right)*
- **Leech Lake Career Fairs:** The Chippewa National Forest participates annually at recruitment events at the Northern Lights Casino and at the Leech Lake Tribal College, Fond du Lac and White Earth Reservations.



### ***Advancing a Memorandum of Understanding***

- In 2011, the National Forest and the Leech Lake Band worked toward better consultation practices that could advance development of an MOU. The most recent example included the Forest Service Eastern Region Forester and members of the Tribal Council discussing a possible regulatory motorized use Agreement.
- Consultation occurred on multiple national initiatives in 2011: a new Forest Service Planning Rule, the Farm Bill (Sections 8103 & 8105), a new Administrative Appeal Rule, Paleontological Resources Preservation, Management of Forest Service System Surface Resources, Aerial Application of Fire Retardant, NEPA Categorical Exclusions, and a Sacred Sites Draft Report of the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Ongoing actions the Chippewa National Forest and Tribal Government can take to improve the local social and economic conditions for local band members such as: increasing the employability of band members for permanent positions that become vacant on the National Forest; utilizing the existing capacities of the Band to perform service and construction work; operations and maintenance of recreation sites garbage collection, road maintenance and other labor intensive project work, and supporting establishment of a 1 or 2 year Natural Resources Management certificate or degree program through the Leech Lake Tribal College.